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**Trust: The Key to the Success of Mission Command in the Joint Force**

**by**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed  
by the Naval War College of the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature:\_\_\_\_\_**

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### Paper Abstract

As the United States military continues to encounter more asymmetric and hybrid security threats, it has moved to the decentralized command philosophy of Auftragstaktik, or mission command. In moving to mission command, we must acknowledge that trust is one of the most important components of a decentralized command philosophy. Adding to this challenge is an increasingly joint force, often assembled without the ability to build trust. To successfully enable this command philosophy, the U.S. military has to find a method outside of time intensive interaction to build that trust. This study looks particularly at the German model of employing Auftragstaktik and gaining trust through rigorous education and the decentralization of many personnel systems. It identifies current U.S. systems that betray trust and identifies possible solutions to an internalized understanding and practice of mission command.

## **WHY TRUST MATTERS IN MISSION COMMAND**

Perhaps the greatest successes of decentralized command came at the tactical and operational levels during WWII in the form of the German Blitzkrieg strategy. The speed and ability to exploit initiative predicated upon the freedom of action allowed by Auftragstaktik, or commonly, mission command.<sup>1</sup> Particular successes such as the 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Divisions' crossing of the Meuse River during their advance into France conceptualizes the decentralized philosophy of mission command.<sup>2</sup> The German army began to adapt their command philosophy to a complex, changing threat much like the U.S. Military is attempting today.

In May 1940, elements of the XIX Motorized Corps were postured one day early for their advance in the Ardennes forest. Decentralization allowed the orders process from initial corps warning order to divisions' operation order to be produced in only 24 hours. Both orders were confined to a combined seven pages that included an elaborate artillery fire plan and timetable. Decision-making speed and exploitation of the initiative was the key to stopping Allied forces from sending reinforcements to defend against a breakthrough. The French troops were so shocked by the German speed in maneuver and decision-making that they retreated, often leaving their weapons. Ultimately, it was the mutual trust that allowed a Lieutenant to maintain the initiative and ultimately set the stage for the entire divisions' crossing.<sup>3</sup>

## **MISSION COMMANDS ROOTS IN AUFTRAGSTAKTIK**

The mission command philosophy is most commonly linked with the Prussian/German philosophy of Auftragstaktik. Decentralized execution through mission orders was discovered to be critical to the success of the Prussian army beginning immediately after their defeat at Jena in 1806. First openly theorized by Gerhard von Scharnhorst and indoctrinated by General von

Moltke, the Germans realized that the speed and technology of the battlefields of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century would preclude higher-level commanders from making all critical decisions.<sup>4</sup> Auftragstaktik was the answer and was quickly institutionalized, and successfully tested in the wars of 1866 and 1870.<sup>5</sup> Mutual trust was a necessity in the implementation of Auftragstaktik. The subordinate had to be trusted to exercise initiative without the fear of reprimand, simultaneously trusting the competence of a commander's intent and vision. The key to Auftragstaktik success was its internalization through a training and education system that facilitated a trust through competence, rigor, and the alignment of the philosophy and its practice.<sup>6</sup>

## **MISSION COMMAND IN TODAY'S JOINT FORCE**

In April 2012, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Martin Dempsey published a white paper on mission command. As the CJCS, Dempsey directed that this concept would become the command philosophy for the entire U.S. military. Dempsey has moved the U.S. Military towards this concept driven by the principles of commander's intent, mission-type orders, and their decentralized execution, after a decade of persistent conflict. The Chairman holds that the philosophy benefits today's military in an uncertain security environment and identifies trust as the first element within the Joint Force 2020 (JF2020) capstone concept.<sup>7</sup> JF2020 stresses the increasing dependency upon globally integrated operations driven by mission command.<sup>8</sup> A renewed focus on professional military education (PME) and officer development paralleling German Auftragstaktik is the best way to build the trust necessary to internalize mission command in an increasingly joint force.

Dempsey states, "Operations will move at the speed of trust,"<sup>9</sup> and slams the door of his white paper stating, "You have my trust."<sup>10</sup> In a 2012 article, COL Tom Guthrie also focused on

the importance of trust in the philosophy, observing, “Without trust, mission command as a routine practice and warfighting function, in garrison and in combat has little hope.”<sup>11</sup> Similarly, in a Joint Force Quarterly article addressing the challenges of mission command, trust and shared understanding were identified as the first major hurdles to its implementation. The author also identified trust as the key to gaining shared understanding within a command of mixed components or nations.<sup>12</sup> He goes further, declaring, “Building and maintaining trust is possibly a commander’s most important action to establish and exercise mission command and to achieve cross-domain synergy.”<sup>13</sup> There is no doubt that the increasing importance of trust will be inherent to the success of mission command, but faces the significant challenges of its development in the joint force.

### **TRUST APPLIED TO THE ORGANIZATION CONSTRUCT**

For this study, a broad focus has been placed on the similarities in hierarchical structures that somewhat mirror the subordinate/leader relationship of a military organization. Trust is being defined as, “the willingness to increase your vulnerability to another person whose behavior you cannot control, in a situation in which your potential benefit is much less than your potential loss if the other person abuses your vulnerability.”<sup>14</sup> That weakness amounts to risk by subordinate, superior, and organization. This study will utilize the German model to identify practical recommendations to enhance trust in our increasingly joint force. The key components that will be brought to bear in regards to trust are the elements of competence and alignment of organizational values with its practical application.

Essentially, much of the research conducted on trust revealed two interdependent components that are applicable to the mission command construct. First, an element of competence. Competence allows the commander to grant autonomy to subordinates and the

subordinate to execute a trusted commander's intent without fear of reprimand. Secondly, alignment in the actions of the organization compared to its verbal or written policies. In his book *Transforming Command*, Eitan Shamir describes this alignment through the espoused theory and theory in use. Simply put, the way we preach versus the way we actually practice.<sup>15</sup> Properly applied, competence and alignment will contain the glue for mission command and can be achieved in the way we educate and develop officers.

Trust expert Stephen Covey identified competence as one of the two functions of trust. This trust is an essential component of his model of, "thirteen behaviors."<sup>16</sup> Some of the most successful business leaders and experts in regards to trust also echo his focus on competence.<sup>17</sup> Saj-Nicole Joni, a noted trust expert, identifies competence as one of the two primary functions of trust described as, "Expertise trust."<sup>18</sup> In 1995, Daniel J. McAllister of Georgetown University identified two separate trust dimensions; cognitive based or affect-based. This cognitive based theory holds that trust results in the integrity or capability (competence) of another party. The affect-based trust depends on a genuine feeling of care or concern between both sides.<sup>19</sup> Combined, these two forms of trust should result in organizational citizenship behavior, or the subordinate going beyond expectations for the organization.<sup>20</sup>

In another organizational trust model, the environment is represented by four elements that include competence.<sup>21</sup> As it relates to mission command, competence obviously plays a huge role between all parties. Without it, the ability to trust subordinates to execute with limited guidance becomes risky. Competence is an important building block to trust and the German Army built it through education and personal development.<sup>22</sup> Competence becomes even more important when you have a joint staff with little time to sow the seeds of trust prior to operational

employment. Even if you build officer competence around the force, the military that preaches and educates mission command but practices the opposite fails at Shamir's alignment.

Amy Lyman, co-founder of The Great Place to Work Institute, found that interviews with her clients always revealed three trust attributes, two of which are credibility and respect. The credibility was built by the ability of an organization to keep actions consistent with policy. The respect referred to the organization's ability to prioritize professional growth and consider subordinate ideas and interests in the decision-making process.<sup>23</sup> Both dimensions are significantly relevant in regards to mission command and the mutual trust necessary for the risk inherent in decentralized command. More importantly, these dimensions speak to the alignment of the values and practice of mission command and the affect-based trust displayed by valuing subordinates.

The freedom of action necessitated by mission command demands the willingness to take a risk, both by subordinate, superior, and organization. According to a modern trust model, ability (competence), benevolence, and integrity are the three keys to this trust. The greater the presence of these three elements, the smaller the perceived risk by both parties.<sup>24</sup> These elements parallel the competence and respect of Lyman's theory as well as the cognitive and affect-based theories of McAllister. Comparatively, the same model found that individual incompetence, organizations with inflexible policies or employers and employees with personal agendas work as barriers to organizational trust.<sup>25</sup> Consistency or alignment, and competence play critical roles in the trust domain, one that can be achieved the way we develop and educate leaders.

Competence also plays into what is known as the control paradox. This paradox clearly relates to mission command's decentralized nature. This theory compares supervised control



against productivity and effort by subordinates. This paradox points to the benefits of limited control and increased production; however, this is only possible through a delicate balance between the risk and reward between supervisors and subordinate.<sup>26</sup> Without a mutual trust in the competence and motive between the subordinate and superior, misalignment can occur. Stephen Covey describes these as manifestations of alignment (or lack thereof), much like Lyman's credibility piece already discussed. Misapplied policies and doctrine can become symbols of distrust and can override any rhetoric. These symbols of distrust can have a serious effect on subordinates, and their consistency is an absolute necessity to organizational trust.<sup>27</sup>

In *Transforming Command*, Shamir puts alignment of the organizational culture in further perspective through Edgar Schein's three levels of the cultural organization. For mission command to be successful, its official doctrinal elements must be clearly adhered to in its, "theory of use."<sup>28</sup> Simply put, between the alignment principles of Covey, Lyman, and Shamir, the organization must practice what it preaches, or suffer a gap in intentions and behaviors that lead to misalignment.<sup>29</sup> This gap is where the U.S. Military struggles today. Utilizing a PME system modeled after the German Auftragstaktik can not only align the joint force understanding and use of mission command, but overall competence of the officer corps and the way they employ mission command through increased education and development.

### **INTERNALIZATION THROUGH (JPME): APPLYING THE GERMAN MODEL**

In the early 1900s, the Germans created one of the finest models in the world. The model prioritized education first and aligned the practice and philosophy of Auftragstaktik.<sup>30</sup> In an interview with noted naval theorist Dr. Milan Vego, he stressed the importance of an educated military as a prerequisite for successful mission command.<sup>31</sup> Employing a decentralized execution system not only requires competence but a clear understanding and experience

applying the mission command philosophy that would represent the competence and alignment discussed in the above trust models. Eitan Shamir identified the interpretation of mission command as the first definitive gap in applying the philosophy.<sup>32</sup> This gap can be addressed in the concurrent way our PME systems educate mission command, and the way leaders follow through in professionally developing subordinates. That competence built in the PME system would built a mutual confidence in the entire officer system throughout the joint service.

Time is the primary reason why the joint force must look to PME to fill the competence hole in the trust gap. COL Guthrie wrote that trust must be earned and is done so over time through a mix of personal interactions and dialog.<sup>33</sup> Often, when a joint force is established, it will lack the time most military organizations depend on to build trust. A RAND Corporation study found that 70 percent of Joint Task Forces (JTFs) had less than 42 days of interaction before they were thrown in the proverbial, fight. While a partial solution was found to fill a particular capability gap in the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command (JECC), these elements are not designed to stay with the JTF longer than 120 days.<sup>34</sup> They can certainly help a JTF establish capabilities, but that can hardly ensure the trust necessary in within that joint force. Since, in an increasingly joint force, time to build affect-based trust is not available, that competence must be developed through rigorous education and its employment of mission command.

PME, mainly shaped by the German model can achieve trust through competence in four main areas. First, it ensures the alignment of the mission command concept across the joint force. Second, a more rigorous PME can lend itself to more competent officers who reach a JFC upholding a reputation of competence. Third, by prioritizing education, especially in instructor selection, it clearly establishes the organization's dedication to building competence and aligning structures and systems.<sup>35</sup> Finally, earlier joint familiarization in education (much like the

combined arms concept) can serve to break inter-service cultures and distrust. Trust was inherent to the German officer corps, and even the junior German officers were treated with the highest regard. German officers earned this mutual trust by establishing a highly professional officer corps, founded on the premise of constant development and education.<sup>36</sup>

The Germans internalized Auftragstaktik throughout the entire education system. Wehrkreis-Prufung (pretest for Kriegsakademie) and the Kriegsakademie (German General Staff College) served as a beacon of Auftragstaktik, a lifelong professional education journey. During Wehrkreis-Prufung, officers were given tactical dilemmas grades above their current rank, allowed to write only one page of orders and a brief description of their verbal orders. There was no approved strict school solution, creativity was exalted, and exams were consistently changed.<sup>37</sup> The pretest preparation also forced interdependent affect-based trust with superior and subordinate officers as the commander played a vital part in recommending officers for PME instead of a centralized selection board. The system internalized decentralized decision-making while forcing the officer corps to provide brief orders focused on the intent and continued throughout the German education system.<sup>38</sup> The method linked the alignment necessary for trust in an organization that matches actions with words, and helped fill the interpretation gap identified by Shamir.<sup>39</sup> The Germans practiced Auftragstaktik as it was internalized and required a constant personal devotion to development to succeed.

The German model continued to build trust in the alignment of the philosophy and teachings of Auftragstaktik by adhering to the group value theory. This theory essentially bases organizational trust on markers of respect to the employee, most importantly, the ability to have a legitimate voice.<sup>40</sup> This theory also coincides with Amy Lyman's identification of credibility, respect, and fairness in organizational trust. Germans shaped this trust by continually probing

even junior officers for their opinions on important matters, even as a student at the Kriegsakademie. They were given open forums to criticize instruction while maintaining respect.<sup>41</sup>

So internalized was the respect and competence of young officers that even the Wehrkreis-Prüfung looked for changes in current tactics from officers who took the exam.<sup>42</sup> The Germans rewarded and listened to creativity and initiative, further bonding officers with the system. Comparatively a social-psychological study identified conformity issues within the U.S. Army that ring true in the U.S. military today. The “rewarding of conformity and the suppression of initiative... those officers who were conformists, were the most likely to have been promoted.”<sup>43</sup> This conformity hardly cements trust in a command philosophy predicated on initiative and autonomy. More importantly, this violates the alignment of trust between organization and employee. The German system played to McAllister’s interpersonal or affection based trust. The individual reacts positively to a system that values open discussion and ideas, especially since successes of subordinate and superior are interdependent; this is lacking in the current U.S. system.<sup>44</sup> This affect-based trust in the system can help fill the gap left by time in a joint command.

While the Germans internalized decentralized decision-making and creativity into their pretest, War College, and training, the U.S. has done the opposite. At the Command and General Staff College (CGSC), less than half of the mission command instruction is based on the critical thinking that stands at its core. Even though we have transitioned to a command philosophy dependent upon critical thinking, the amount of time established for that skill has not changed.<sup>45</sup> Teaching mission command but applying it in a centralized educational forum can serve as symbols of distrust, which ultimately discredit organizational rhetoric on the philosophy.<sup>46</sup> To

avoid this misalignment and further cement the importance of education in building trust in mission command, a significant priority must be placed on the system and those who educate. Clear priority will build trust in that system and the philosophy it underwrites.

Currently, PME instructor positions in the U.S. military may be seen as a detriment to career progression. Instructors must be rewarded instead of becoming the pre-retirement step some represent today to add legitimacy to PME institutions.<sup>47</sup> Instructors across the German advanced military schools were filled with their finest officers. The selection was not a matter of availability or convenience, but absolute aptitude. Credible experience was necessary, and German students were institutionalized by the likes of Erwin Rommel or Heinz Guderian. The army personnel office held teacher journeys where they would select the brightest officers with the greatest aptitude for instruction, not solely experience.<sup>48</sup> To embed trust in the organization and its commitment to mission command through education, the U.S. must ensure the proper steps are taken to prioritize key educational positions. Top instructors facilitate the competence in trust, and the organizations clear priority to inculcate mission command.

While the German education system clearly internalized the application of Auftragstaktik and overall competence of their officer corps, it also bridged gaps between Army branches. From the Wehrkreis-Prufung forward, education and training during PME were combined in nature. The pretest involved sections of combined arms questions that could theoretically be transferred to a joint system today. Once at the Kriegsakademie, at least three months of the year were dedicated to combined arms training and knowledge.<sup>49</sup> It would not be difficult to add this joint flavor to PME across the services and ensure officers are not receiving their first joint experience as a field grade officer at a JMPE course. A shifted focus on joint education earlier in

the career bridges the culture, time, and service gaps. This system could also serve to build a competence-based trust between officers in different services with much broader experience.

The internalization of Auftragstaktik and an overall increase in trust starts with the way the U.S. educates its leaders. Matching the concept to the actual instruction of mission command satisfies not only Covey's organizational alignment concepts, but also Shamir's first gap of interpretation previously discussed. Mutual trust will result from a clear understanding of mission command across the force, and will further seed that trust with a rigorous education system that lifts the competence of all officers and creates a more joint service culture. Earlier introduction to the joint construct can also familiarize officers with other services as the U.S. attempts to mitigate service bias. However, if the internalization ends in the schoolhouse, ultimately trust will flail. Ultimately, the successes of education must be brought to bear for the rest of our development and training.

### **PRACTICE MUST MATCH WHAT IS PREACHED**

PME is matured the way we develop leaders in the force or fleet. The joint force can continue to internalize the mission command philosophy and build organizational trust in the way it develops leaders before and after formal PME, further instilling the proper tenets of mission command. In German Auftragstaktik, officers had the responsibility to mentor younger officers for the pretest. Interdependence ensured they were deeply invested in the education of their non-commissioned officers. Development was planned and executed at the unit level rather than the dictated from above.<sup>50</sup> American officers testified, "The German officer aspirant is trained to be constantly on the alert to be able to express his thoughts logically and distinctly before a group of subordinates, equals, or superiors."<sup>51</sup> A decentralized professional

development model ensured constant improvement and enhanced the already internalized PME instruction.

The problem in the U.S. system is that it develops leaders outside of formal PME to avoid mistakes and risk, often relying on higher guidance rather than a decentralized development model. Practice and theory are uncoordinated, further seeding distrust in the organization and the philosophy. A better-rounded and more competent officer developed in a rigorous education process can be more easily trusted within a decentralized organization and vice-versa. The result should be a gift exchange between subordinate, leader, and organization (effort for autonomy).<sup>52</sup> The greatest challenge will ultimately be dissolving an atmosphere of risk aversion that is perceived in today's military.

A perceived zero-tolerance environment creates the gaps in trust and mission command previously identified by Shamir and Covey. As the Army was discussing Auftragstaktik in 1987, John T. Nelson wrote, "The strongest psychological impediment to Auftragstaktik in the U.S. Army is fear on the part of the commander that his subordinates' mistakes would negatively affect his career... Over control, to be honest, is the reflex of the commander's own career insecurity."<sup>53</sup> This zero-defect mentality is seen across the entire force. In 2013, the Navy fired 16 commanding officers. These reliefs of command are almost exclusively for running aground or personal misconduct,<sup>54</sup> which leads back to the issue trust through competence. Today, it is nearly impossible to imagine a young ensign like Admiral Chester Nimitz running a craft aground and escaping with his career. In fact, a *Stars and Stripes* article assessed that Ensign Nimitz would have never had success in today's Navy, seen as too risk averse to allow young officers to learn from their mistakes.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, an aversion to risk creates an environment without the mutual trust necessary to allow creativity and initiative.

Without a system that allows subordinates to run with the initiative delegated by a commander, the entire trust mechanism implodes, along with the ability to decentralize execution. The U.S. development outside of formal PME must focus on producing leaders that are comfortable taking the initiative and making mistakes. Changes should also be considered to how evaluation and promotion systems treat errors under the premise of the initiative. Changes to these systems are beyond the scope of this paper, but would bring about more alignment to the way the U.S. teaches and practices mission command.

This aversion and conformity have crept into the flag officer ranks. LTC Paul Yingling wrote in, *A Failure in Generalship*, about the inability of senior leaders to become anything but rigid molds of their predecessors. “It is unreasonable to expect that an officer who spends 25 years conforming to institutional expectations will emerge as an innovator in his late forties.”<sup>56</sup> The issue of trust is not only from a top-down perspective, but also from the bottom up. Yingling believes that for the military to expect innovative and tactical leaders, a system that promotes mutual trust in the officer and system must be developed.<sup>57</sup>

Noted naval theorist Milan Vego said that in order to achieve the success of the mission command philosophy, all branches of the military would have to consider forgiving some human frailties, or risk losing great commanders, as he succinctly put it, “true warriors.”<sup>58</sup> The careers of leaders like George Patton or Dwight Eisenhower would be in question within today’s military system. Patton’s physical encounter with two Soldiers in late 1943 certainly delayed his career advancement, but ultimately his abilities as a commander overrode his mistakes.<sup>59</sup> Likewise, Dwight Eisenhower was reprimanded for bringing the infantry and armor branches together in a discussion to mechanize the Calvary.<sup>60</sup> Internalizing mission command throughout the PME and



development process would avoid the creation of conformist, risk averse officers. Again, it is dependent on their trust in superiors and the system that emulates mission command.

The zero-tolerance mentality was also discussed in a 1999 article on applying mission command to joint and combined teams. The mutual trust identified for the successful implementation of mission command at the joint level was based on a manifestation of superior-subordinate professionalism. Both that the commander can trust the competence of the subordinate to act within his intent, and that the subordinate will not be reprimanded by the commander for bad judgment or error.<sup>61</sup> This mutual trust is an imperative that must be reached throughout the joint organization. Importantly, for mission command to succeed, senior leaders have to develop junior leaders that initiative reigns over minor mistakes. Again, the answer was competence and alignment.

German officer development stressed the outright duty to make independent decisions. Error in judgment was regarded less detrimental than indecision. Prudent risk-taking was inherent in battle, and tactical mistakes were utilized to enhance the learning and development process. The process developed a self-trust of officers to take the initiative, but a mutual trust between the officer and the system that aligned process and practice.<sup>62</sup> Their development and training model was based on outcomes rather than strict discipline to orders. While there was certainly a critical focus on decentralized training and action rather than omission, failed officers were relieved and effective officers promoted.<sup>63</sup> The Germans simply used outcome-based training and education that focused on problem solving and framing rather than solutions that must fit inside a doctrinal construct.<sup>64</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The first step is the institutionalized definition of mission command. While the Germans lived the philosophy, it would help to capture it to align all of the services with foundations and components. Case studies are probably the most effective way to approach its institutionalization, and across the different domains.<sup>65</sup> Alignment of the philosophy and how the U.S. applies it is critical. In 1987, John T. Nelson wrote, “Any process of formal adoption would require codified doctrinal articulation of exactly what was meant. Without such articulation, it would be virtually impossible for service schools and units around the globe to implement the approach in a uniform way.”<sup>66</sup>

Institutionalizing the definition and practice of mission command also satisfies the gap identified by both Covey, Lyman and Shamir in the interpretation of the philosophy and the alignment to ensure the services’ practice what they preach. The addition of an outcomes-based education and development system could help in this alignment. Further, the addition of a mission command doctrine to the Joint Doctrine Hierarchy as a keystone publication would clarify and align all services while utilizing case studies to cement the tenets of mission command.<sup>67</sup> A joint organization mirrored after the Mission Command Center of Excellence employed by the U.S. Army to monitor and implement the philosophy throughout the force can help ensure its accurate application. A similar structure could do the same for the joint force.<sup>68</sup> However, the implementation of such a structure must act as restricted augmenter to avoid the centralization of mission command development.

Competence can be significantly increased through a more rigorous, decentralized PME process. A selection process similar to the Wehrkreis-Prufung can be utilized across the services, integrating a joint knowledge base similar to the combined arms function employed by

the Germans.<sup>69</sup> This system would ensure a constant loop of professional development and joint knowledge. There is already a merit-based selection process in place,<sup>70</sup> but no educational based pretest. The military is selecting JMPE attendance based primarily on performance rather than a combination including intellectual prowess. PME and JPME opportunities can also extend in length with the decrease in combat operations. The competence of officers will increase along with competence driven trust in joint organizations. Students remained at the Kriegsakademie alone for three years.<sup>71</sup> Increased education would produce officers with a respected competence and align the importance of how the U.S. educates and develops officers within the mission command philosophy.

The German application of combined arms proficiency into their professional military education can also be applied but at the joint level. As stated, three months of every year at the Kriegsakademie was spent learning a combined arm. At the junior levels of basic officer education, this can be mandatory across the entire joint force and between services. Time can be built in at every level of education to create at least the familiarization with other service organizations. This process would go a long way to improving the trust in competence through each service and appreciation for service capabilities. The process would ultimately attack two challenges: time and service culture. Greater interdependent cultural understanding can minimize the time necessary to trust and cut through service culture lines.

Finally, the zero-tolerance perception has to be changed throughout the military. Total risk aversion cannot be sufficiently tackled within this paper, but it can begin with the professional development of our officers. Shamir points out that is leaders who drive, represent, and create the culture for a military organization. To ensure the alignment of how we teach and preach mission command, it starts with the education and professional development of our

officers.<sup>72</sup> The atmosphere of the services must be turned upside down to reward critical thought, even if it strays from doctrine. A good start would be the outcome-based focus already discussed, implemented in both education and development. It can start at the smallest tactical level and eventually inhabit the personnel and training systems throughout the joint force. If officers cannot trust superiors and the organization to allow them to take risk without career-ending punishment, the whole system of trust and mission command will collapse on itself.

Though the changes necessary to facilitate trust in a joint force may seem extreme, so are the circumstances. The military continues to push interoperability, and the security environment will most likely not become any simpler. The alignment of mission command doctrine, an improved (J)PME system, and application to training and development, likened to the German Auftragstaktik will help ensure that mission command is practiced as well as it is preached. Alignment will continue to build trust in the organization and entire officer corps as the U.S. moves forward. In *Transforming Command*, the most common cultural element necessary for the success of mission command was identified as trust.<sup>73</sup> This trust can and must be fostered by the continued professional education of our officers across the joint force. General Dempsey warns us, “Joint and service doctrine, education and training are keys to achieving the habit of mission command... our schools must teach it, and we must train individually and collectively to it.”<sup>74</sup>

## NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Eitan Shamir, *Transforming Command: The Pursuit of Mission Command in the U.S. British, and Israeli Armies* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2011), 3.
- <sup>2</sup> John J. McGrath, "A Motorized Infantry Regiment Crosses the Meuse River, May 1940," in *16 Cases of Mission Command*, ed. Donald P. Wright (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, Combat Studies Institute Press, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center), 53-63.
- <sup>3</sup> McGrath, "A Motorized Infantry Regiment Crosses the Meuse River, May 1940," 53-62.
- <sup>4</sup> Donald E. Vandergriff, "Misinterpretation and Confusion: What is Mission Command and Can the U.S. Army Make it Work?" *The Land Warfare Papers* no. 94 (2013): 2-4.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 3-4.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 12.
- <sup>7</sup> General Martin E. Dempsey, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Mission Command*, U.S. Government White Paper (Washington, D.C.: Department of Justice, April 2012), 3.
- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* (Washington, D.C: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012), 4.
- <sup>9</sup> Dempsey, *Mission Command*, U.S. Government White Paper, 6.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 8.
- <sup>11</sup> COL Tom Guthrie, "Mission Command: Do We Have the Stomach For What is Really Required?" *Army Magazine*, June 2012, 26.
- <sup>12</sup> Parrington and Finlay, "Mission Command: Addressing Challenges and Sharing Insights," 103.
- <sup>13</sup> Parrington and Finlay, "Mission Command: Addressing Challenges and Sharing Insights," 105.
- <sup>14</sup> Dale E. Zand, *The Leadership Triad: Knowledge, Trust, and Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 91.
- <sup>15</sup> Shamir, *Transforming Command*, 23.
- <sup>16</sup> Stephen M.R. Covey with Rebecca R. Merrill, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (New York, Free Press, 2006), 30, 127-230. Author discusses all thirteen behaviors observed in building trust accounts through critical observed behavior.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 31. Author lists nine business and organizational experts and theories that utilize competence and character as a foundation for trust.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>19</sup> Kurt T. Dirks and Daniel P. Skarlicki, "Trust in Leaders: Existing Research and Emerging Issues," in *Trust and Distrust in Organizations: Dilemmas and Approaches*, ed. Roderick M. Kramer and Karen S. Cook (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), 28.
- <sup>20</sup> Dirks and Skarlicki, "Trust in Leaders," in *Trust and Distrust*, 24-28.
- <sup>21</sup> Becky J. Starnes, Stephen A. Truhon, and Vikkie McCarthy, "A Primer on Organizational: Organizational Trust: Employee-Employer Relationships," *ASQ*, October 2010, [rube.asq.org/hdl/2010/06/a-primer-on-organizational-trust.pdf](http://rube.asq.org/hdl/2010/06/a-primer-on-organizational-trust.pdf), 9.
- <sup>22</sup> Jörg Muth, *Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901-1940, and the Consequences in World War II* (Denton, Texas, University of Texas Press, 2011), 181-211.
- <sup>23</sup> Chris Hitch, "How to Build Trust in an Organization," *UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School* (2012), <http://www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/executive-development/custom-programs/~media/827B6E285F2141C49D407DF7E5F5A1C4.ashx>, 4.
- <sup>24</sup> Starnes, Truhon, and McCarthy, "A Primer on Organizational Trust," 6.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 5-8.
- <sup>26</sup> Gary J. Miller, "Monitoring, Rules, and the Control Paradox: Can the Good Soldier Švejk Be Trust?" in *Trust and Distrust in Organizations: Dilemmas and Approaches*, ed. Roderick M. Kramer and Karen S. Cook (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), 112-113.
- <sup>27</sup> Covey and Merrill, *The Speed of Trust*, 239-243. The author describes misalignment of organizational rhetoric and the organizations actual actions, or symbols of trust or distrust.
- <sup>28</sup> Shamir, *Transforming Command*, 23.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid*.

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- <sup>30</sup> Vandergriff, "Misinterpretation and Confusion," 12.
- <sup>31</sup> Milan Vego (Naval War College Department of Joint Military Operations), Interview by the author, 16 April 2015.
- <sup>32</sup> Shamir, *Transforming Command*, 6.
- <sup>33</sup> Guthrie, "Mission Command: Do We Have the Stomach For What is Really Required," 26.
- <sup>34</sup> Patrick C. Sweeney, *A Primer for the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command (JECC)*. NWC 2003D, (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, Department of Joint Military Operations, 9 February 2015), 3-7.
- <sup>35</sup> Covey and Merrill, *The Speed of Trust*, pg 239-240.
- <sup>36</sup> Muth, *Command Culture*, 166-167.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid, 152-157.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid, 152-153.
- <sup>39</sup> Shamir, *Transforming Command*, 6.
- <sup>40</sup> Miller, "Monitoring Rules," in *Trust and Distrust in Organizations*, 130.
- <sup>41</sup> Muth, *Command Culture*, 162-163.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid. 154
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid. 167
- <sup>44</sup> Dirks and Skarlicki, "Trust in Leaders," in *Trust and Distrust in Organizations*, 28-29.
- <sup>45</sup> Nicholas Murray, "The Role of Professional Military Education in Mission Command," *Joint Force Quarterly* 72 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (2014): 10-12.
- <sup>46</sup> Covey and Merrill, *The Speed of Trust*, p240.
- <sup>47</sup> Murray, "The Role of Professional Military Education in Mission Command," 13.
- <sup>48</sup> Muth, *Command Culture*, 162-163.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid, 152-166.
- <sup>50</sup> Muth, *Command Culture*, 160-161.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid, 160.
- <sup>52</sup> Miller, "Monitoring Rules," in *Trust and Distrust in Organizations* 108-110.
- <sup>53</sup> John T. Nelsen II, "Auftragstaktik: A Case for Decentralized Battle," *Parameters*, (September 1987): 31.
- <sup>54</sup> Capt. (R) Kevin Eyer, "Opinion: Why More Commanding Officers Are Getting Fired," *USNI News*, September 30, 2013, [news.usni.org/2013/09/30/opinion-commanding-officers-getting-fired](http://news.usni.org/2013/09/30/opinion-commanding-officers-getting-fired).
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- <sup>56</sup> LTC (USA) Paul Yingling, "A Failure in Generalship," *Armed Forces Journal*, (May 1, 2007), [www.armedforcesjournal.com/a-failure-in-generalship/](http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/a-failure-in-generalship/).
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>58</sup> Vego, interview.
- <sup>59</sup> Carlo D'Este, "The Triumph and Tragedy of George S. Patton, Jr," *Armchair General*, May 4, 2005, <http://www.armchairgeneral.com/the-triumph-and-tragedy-of-george-s-patton-jr-the-slapping-incidents-in-sicily-hm>.
- <sup>60</sup> Muth, *Command Culture*, 165-166.
- <sup>61</sup> David M. Keithly and Stephen P. Ferris, "Auftragstaktik, or Directive Control, in Joint and Combined Operations," *Parameters*, (Autumn 1999), [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fs.fed.us%2Ffire%2Fdoctrine%2Fphilosophy%2Fsource\\_materials%2Fauftragstaktik-keithly\\_and\\_ferris.doc](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fs.fed.us%2Ffire%2Fdoctrine%2Fphilosophy%2Fsource_materials%2Fauftragstaktik-keithly_and_ferris.doc).
- <sup>62</sup> Major (USA) John T. Nelson II, "Where to Go from Here? Considerations for the Formal Adoption of Auftragstaktik" (research paper, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1986), 9-14.
- <sup>63</sup> Vandergriff, "Misinterpretation and Confusion, 12.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid, 13-14.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid, 11.
- <sup>66</sup> John T. Nelsen II, "Auftragstaktik: A Case for Decentralized Battle," *Parameters*, (September 1987): 32.
- <sup>67</sup> Joint Doctrine Hierarchy, accessed 20 April 2015, <http://dtic.mil/doctrine/doctrine/status.pdf>.

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<sup>68</sup> U.S. Army Combined Arms Center Mission Command Center of Excellence web site, accessed on 12 April 2015, <http://usacac.army.mil/organizations/mccoe>.

<sup>69</sup> Muth, *Command Culture*, 157.

<sup>70</sup> Murray, "The Role of Professional Military Education in Mission Command," 11.

<sup>71</sup> Muth, *Command Culture*, 163.

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